

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting10th September 2015

1. Title of Item/Report

Shaping a Brighter Future Update

2. Record of the Decision

Consideration was given to a report that provided an update on Shaping a Brighter Future.

The Shaping a Brighter Future (SBF) programme had been developed to increase capabilities, build capacity and resilience, and support succession planning in the workforce. The SBF programme proposal was approved by Cabinet in January 2014 followed, in April 2014, by approval of the more detailed individual work streams that would make up the programme. Significant progress had been made since then, and there had been a number of early successes.

The 16 January 2014 Cabinet report set the context for the SBF programme. The challenges remained valid and were:-

- Serious financial pressures – the Medium Term Financial Plan position was reported to Cabinet on 16 July 2015 and indicated an estimated budget gap of £17m in 2018/2019. The Big Picture Programme to reduce the gap is expected to result in a period of significant organisational change;
- The increasing demands on services as a consequence of an ageing population;
- Fundamental changes due to welfare reforms;
- Changes in the delivery structures for social care services and the NHS and integrations between the two as required by the Better Care Fund;
- Changes to the delivery of strategic economic development linked to the LEP, Combined Authority and City Deal;
- An ageing workforce and associated loss of extremely experienced and knowledgeable staff through retirement;
- Similar to other local authorities, increased signs of stress and fatigue in the workforce.

These challenges were however only part of the context and the Council

also recognised that:-

- Huge potential and talent in the organisation as evidenced by APSE awards, positive feedback from residents and businesses and a host of nationally recognised accreditations and awards across our services.
- A strong track record and culture of employee development.
- A dedicated, high performing and committed workforce who care about their work and enjoy being part of the Council.
- An ongoing commitment to maintaining our Investors in People and Customer Service Excellence accreditations

The SBF programme reflected these realities and accepted that the Council had a responsibility and duty to support and develop employees through these challenging times. It was an essential element of the ongoing commitment to long term planning and investment in the organisation and was arguably the most important invest-to-save project the Council embarked on. It underpinned the Big Picture programme.

The Council investment in the workforce was critical to meeting the future challenges and the SBF programme was another example of how the long term and planned approach to development was serving the organisation well. It was reflected in the positive results from the 2014 Employee Survey, with employees expressing strong feelings of being valued, engaged and empowered and, significantly for SBF, expressing a readiness to take responsibility for helping make the organisation be more innovative.

The programme was envisaged as a long term (5 year) programme and whilst some benefits had been realised in the shorter term, it was important to recognise that other outputs and outcomes would take longer to come to fruition.

The principle of the SBF programme was that the Council build more capacity in the organisation by investing in its people and grow its own talent to increase capability through personal and team development.

The SBF Programme was being delivered through eight work stream teams and this was detailed within the report.

In addition there were two teams ensuring that the whole programme remained on track and keeps all employees and stakeholders informed. These teams were:-

- Programme Management & Resource Network
- Communications

The latter parts of 2014 and early 2015 were taken up with establishing the Resource Network and setting up the work stream teams. All the teams were operational and meeting regularly. SBF was set up to be a long-term programme, described as a “marathon, rather than a sprint”, but already there were several early successes to report and these were detailed within the report.

There were also a number of other pieces of work in progress and expected to start producing benefits before the end of the financial year and these were also detailed within the report.

The teams were still working up the detail of their longer term work programmes, but plans included:-

- A new apprenticeship/traineeship programme designed to help with hard to recruit areas and to fill skills gaps.
- Development of a system that identifies the talents, potential and aspirations of all employees, defines the talents that will be of benefit to the organisation and a process that enables us to use this information to meet the objectives of the SBF programme.
- Development of a range of tools and interventions that will support more effective team work.
- Development of new models for partnership working in the future.

Members were reminded that Mel Nixon, an experienced specialist in organisational change, worked with the Chief Executive to shape the initial concept of SBF into its present delivery format. In recognition of the good progress made in establishing the Resource Network and setting up the work stream teams and reflecting his confidence in the ability to deliver successful outcomes, Mel stepped down from his advisory role at the end of January. This update presented an opportunity to record the Council thanks to Mel for his valuable contribution.

There had been national interest in the SBF programme:

- APSE were following progress and were keen to explore the links between SBF and the APSE model of the “Ensuring Council”, which endorsed the role of local authorities as stewards of local wellbeing and supported the maintenance of core in-house service provision. The Chief Executive addressed this subject when he spoke at the APSE annual seminar at the beginning of the month.
- The Chief Executive had been invited to talk about SBF at a conference in Northern Ireland. The Local Government Staff

Commission for Northern Ireland provided HR support and oversight for councils in Northern Ireland and was interested in using SBF as a case study of innovative practice to help them develop a regional approach to promoting good practice in HR and organisation development activity.

- The LGA had also asked to be kept informed as the programme progresses.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The progress with the development of the SBF programme be noted.
2. Further, regular progress reports on delivery of the programme be received.

3. Reasons for the Decision

This report provides details of progress made on the Shaping a Brighter Future (SBF) programme and information about some early successes.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

Councillor Cook declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 13 – Shaping a Brighter Future as his daughter was employed by the Council.

Councillor Beall declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 13 – Shaping a Brighter Future as his wife was employed by the Council.

6. Details of any Dispensations

N/A

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

18th September 2015

Proper Officer
14 September 2015